

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 124 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Nelson
Bennet	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Carper	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Coons	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kennedy	Strange
Cornyn	King	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Harris	Peters
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Sanders
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Florida.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida.

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I rise to speak briefly this afternoon on the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. There is a growing interest in the matter here among my colleagues in the Senate and the White House and other places—certainly, in the press—and thankfully so. This has been going on now for a significant period of time.

Just to put it in context, a lot of times, when we talk about these sorts of showdowns around the world—these sorts of internal strife—there is this notion that there is this government in place and there is this group that does not like the government and that they are arguing with each other about the future of the country. What is interesting in Venezuela is that both the opposition and the ruling party are in government. The government, obviously, at the Presidential level is controlled by someone who has turned himself into a dictator. He is a successor of Hugo Chavez's—he is the President, Nicolas Maduro—and those who surround him. Then there is the National Assembly that is elected by the people of Venezuela, the majority party in their legislative branch.

What has happened over the last year and a half is that the President of Venezuela, Maduro—the now dictator—has nullified the legislative branch. He basically refuses to recognize the laws they have passed and has stopped allowing transfers. So, basically, today, those in the National Assembly in Venezuela are not getting paid. They have no funds for offices, and they have no funds for material. They will pass a law, and those laws are ignored. That is the ongoing crisis.

The second part of it is that, under their Constitution, Venezuela's Constitution, if you had collected a certain number of signatures by December of this year, by the end of the year, they had to hold a referendum on the President, a recall referendum. They refused to certify the signatures even though the people who collected them turned in four times as many signatures as were necessary.

The third is that they are supposed to have a Governor and legislative elections this year in Venezuela. Maduro has canceled those, and there is no telling, but it does not seem as though they are going to have a Presidential election either.

Here is the bottom line: The strife in Venezuela that is going on today can be solved by having an election of the people of Venezuela, by basically following their existing Constitution, but that is not what they have allowed to have happen. On the contrary, not only are they not allowing these elections to happen, but anyone who protests against them has been jailed; press has been kicked out of the country; CNN has been kicked out of Venezuela, as an example. Now we are seeing reports of there being escalating violence in the streets, and it is extraordinary. What is interesting, though, is that fissures are beginning to develop.

The message we send here today—first of all, to those who are in the streets who are fighting for democracy and for following the law and having elections in Venezuela—is that we stand with you. We will never let your cause fall, and we will never accept these ridiculous moves that Maduro is now taking to rewrite the Constitu-

tion, yet again, through a flawed and fraudulent process.

The second message we have is to the people in the Venezuelan Government who do not want to be a part of what is happening. We now see examples of the Attorney General, Luisa Ortega, who is part of the Maduro government and has been largely friendly but who, lately, has begun to break away from the government, going so far as to criticize the government's escalating repression.

You see it increasingly among the rank and file in the National Guard of Venezuela, who are all armored up like G.I. Joe, facing down these unarmed protesters, but on the other side of the protests are their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their wives, their husbands, and their friends and neighbors. What is really troubling now is that these armed groups—irregular groups, these militias—that Maduro has armed and trained with the help of Cuban intelligence have spun completely out of control.

These groups are going around randomly beating people up, setting up roadblocks, and committing all sorts of acts of violence. They are not uniformed. These are collectives, as they call them—basically, these armed militias—outside of the government who are funded, created by Maduro and who have now begun to spin out of control, even to the point at which they, themselves, I believe, are potentially threatened by these groups who, in addition to funding themselves through the government, have found other ways to fund themselves through illicit means, including through street crime.

This situation is reaching a breaking point, and I think it is an important moment to remind the men and women in uniform in the National Guard of Venezuela that their job is to protect the people of Venezuela, not to oppress them; that their job is to protect and uphold the Constitution of that country, not to cancel it out; to remind them that the men and women on the other side of these protests are their families and their fellow Venezuelans.

Now the time has come to tell the men and women in the Venezuelan Government—many who, perhaps, sympathize with Hugo Chavez and Maduro up to a point—that they do not want to go down with this ship, that they do not want to wind up on the list of people who have participated in this crackdown and in this oppression.

I hope that my colleagues here will continue to work hard. I am encouraged by the amount of bipartisan support that we have begun to create on the issue of Venezuela. I know my colleague, Senator CARDIN, and I have worked out bipartisan legislation that urges the Maduro regime to release all of its political prisoners and express support for a solution to the crisis. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in cosigning this bipartisan legislation.

We also support the administration's efforts at the OAS to continue to work

with regional governments in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brazil, and others who have taken heed of this issue and have played an extraordinary leadership role in raising this in international forums.

Beyond that, I encourage the administration to continue to look for names to sanction. They have the authority under the law—passed not once but twice by this Congress—that allows them to identify specific individuals within the Venezuelan Government who are stealing the money of the Venezuelan people and committing grotesque human rights violations and have real estate and other personal property and cash deposits and bank accounts around the world from what they have illicitly stolen from the people of Venezuela.

Here is my closing point: Maduro's government is now relying on credit from all parts of the world in order to continue to sustain itself.

To any private investment banks and any of these large global banks that are thinking about lending money to Venezuela, you are abetting this regime and its repression, and you will be singled out and named if you participate in continuing to lend them money to fund this.

To the Russian Government, I say that you are not going to get your money back. These guys cannot pay you back.

It is the same for the Chinese Government.

If you continue to lend money to the Maduro regime, they will not be able to pay you back, and you are going to be embarrassed.

The Chinese Government is going to be embarrassed if it continues to loan money to Venezuela.

They cannot and will never pay you back.

The Russians cannot afford to continue to lend money to a government that will not pay them back either.

I urge them to look at that very carefully before they continue to embarrass themselves by lending out their people's money that they will never get back.

This is an important issue. It is in our own hemisphere, and the answer lies one election away. If only the Maduro regime would follow its laws and its Constitution, Venezuela would be on a better path that its people would choose. The alternative to this situation will continue to spiral out of control.

We in this Chamber and in this country will continue to be on the side of the men and women who seek nothing but democracy and seek nothing but peace and reconciliation and a way forward for this nation, which has a deep history of democratic order.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING URBANDALE, IOWA

• Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the city of Urbandale, IA, which was founded 100 years ago.

The city of Urbandale was incorporated on April 16, 1917. Early denizens worked primarily in local coal mines, many of which closed by the late 1940s. Urbandale was also a so-called street car suburb, where residents could commute to their jobs in the city—Des Moines—via a street car on the Urbandale Line until they were replaced by buses in the early 1950s. Over the years, the community saw homes go up, restaurants and business flourish, and people from all corners of the world pass through, from Presidential candidates to Pope John Paul II, who held mass at Living History Farms in 1979. Urbandale is one of those quintessential Iowa towns where you would want to raise a family. Though the community had only 298 residents in the 1920s, today over 40,000 people call Urbandale home.

I would like to congratulate the city of Urbandale on their centennial year, and I ask that my colleagues in the U.S. Senate join me in congratulating them and wishing them another prosperous century. •

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MCCORMICK COUNTY

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, November 2016 marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of McCormick County, the smallest and second youngest county in South Carolina. Known as the Gem of the Freshwater Coast, McCormick's rich history dates back to before our Nation's founding. The first overt act of the American Revolution in South Carolina occurred in McCormick County, at Fort Charlotte near Mount Carmel on July 12, 1775. McCormick continued to grow after the discovery of gold in 1850 and the expansion of the railroad. Today McCormick is known for its "Natural Pace of Life," with ample outdoor recreation opportunities and hospitable citizens.

On behalf of South Carolina and all of us here in the Senate, I offer congratulations to the entire McCormick County community on reaching this milestone. Best wishes for continued success and prosperity. •

REMEMBERING JOHN C. "SKEFF" SHEEHY

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Justice John C. Sheehy, whose life was a Montana story, eulogized with these words from his family

The material follows:

John C. "Skeff" Sheehy, 99, lawyer, jurist, and family patriarch, died Friday, April 7, 2017, at his home in Helena.

Skeff was born Jan. 27, 1918, to Cornelius and Anna Sheehy in Butte, the first of seven

children. Although he lived in other Montana towns for 80 years of his life, he believed, along with his brother Joe, that "if you're not in Butte, you're camping out." He was educated at Catholic schools in Butte, attended the Montana School of Mines (now Montana Tech) and then the University of Montana School of Law. He obtained his law degree in 1943 and went to work in Helena for insurance commissioner J.D. Holmes.

Skeff married Rita Ann Schiltz in 1945, and only death would part them. In 1947, they moved to Billings, Rita's hometown. Skeff began a 30-year law practice with his brother-in-law and great friend, Jack Schiltz. They tried all manner of cases and represented all sorts of clients. They also had a lot of fun. Schiltz and Sheehy were responsible for most of the skits, songs and frivolity at the Billings Bar meetings for decades. Over time, Schiltz and Sheehy joined others in the practice, including George Hutton, R.G. Wiggenhorn, and Brent Cromley. Skeff's professional accomplishments were recognized by the State Bar of Montana in 2005 with the Jameson Award and by the Montana Trial Lawyers Association in 2016 with its first lifetime achievement award.

Between 1959 and 1970, Skeff served in both houses of the state legislature. He was the first Democrat to break the "straight eight" Republican legislative block in Yellowstone County during those decades of county-wide ballots. In 1978, Gov. Tom Judge appointed Sheehy to the Montana Supreme Court. He was elected to his seat twice before retiring in 1991. Justice Sheehy was the author of the decision rejecting the challenge to Montana's coal severance tax. The United States Supreme Court upheld his decision. Throughout his tenure on the court, Sheehy was known as a champion of the powerless who recognized the role the constitutions of his state and nation played in ensuring that the least among us was accorded the same rights and privileges as those more fortunate.

After his death, clients he represented and lawyers he influenced made sure his family knew about his quiet influence. The child of one client, whom he represented without compensation, told the family how much it meant to their family just to have a man like Sheehy at their side in a dispute with the Internal Revenue Service. "It wasn't a fairy tale ending," she noted. "We still had to pay something. But we had our dignity back. And from that time forward, your father's name was spoken in our house with a reverence otherwise reserved for God."

The family also heard from judges and lawyers throughout the state, echoing common themes:

"Your dad was the number one hero and inspiration in the law to me."

"Your dad set the standard for what a supreme court justice should be. He cared about people, he cared about fundamental rights, and he was a master of the language."

"Your dad was a great mentor. He had a way of teaching without preaching. And he made the work fun. He always lightened the occasion with a song or a poem. We all loved him so." A devoted Catholic, Sheehy attended Mass every morning and said the rosary every night. His faith guided him through the Great Depression, a near-fatal car wreck in 1936, Montana politics in the 60s and 70s, an armed assailant in his Supreme Court office in 1984, the death of his beloved Rita in 2012, and everything in between.

Skeff and Rita raised eleven children long before "parent" was a verb. In those days without cell phones and texts, Dad communicated with full voice, songs, prayer, jokes, and sometimes long silences. He imparted much wisdom, ranging from "Trust everyone, but cut the cards," to "you'd starve to death with a ham on your back." He rarely